

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHASE TWO – Progress Report 2

Recommendation 1	The Review Team notes that the project on groups work is in its early stages but also noted continuing student concerns. It recommends that students be informed of the existence and progress of the project. <i>(See 4.3.5)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The TIF funded group work project produced a report for staff in the faculty and for the wider university community. This included detailed guidelines on working effectively with group activities and assessment. Outcomes from the report have been presented at the College of Science and Technology Showcase and research papers presented at the 2006 HERDSA conference. ▪ Groupwork was the Forum Theme for the 2005 College Showcase with presentations in this area from all College faculties. ▪ The School of IT, where group work is used most extensively, has conducted further projects on the student involvement in group work. The Wattle Tree program analyses the functioning and success of groups and integrates extensive discussion with students. A longitudinal study of student group work during the degree program further analysed students' perceptions of working in groups. Results have been presented at the College Showcase, published in journals and conference proceedings, and discussed with successive cohorts of students..
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new TIF project for 2006 is focussing on student leadership in group work using feedback and input from students as they progress through their degree program working in group situations. It is envisaged that outcomes from this project will further communicate to and engage with students in the Faculty. ▪ All publications and reports on group work will be available on the Faculty Learning and Teaching webpage, currently under construction.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes from the IT projects indicate that students in these areas are engaging in group work more productively, and are more positive about the experience. ▪ Responses to SCEQ questions on team work indicate that student perceptions of teamwork in their degree program have improved from 2003

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Recommendation 2	The Faculty commends the work being done in the Faculty in relation to feedback on assessed work and assessment standards, and recommends that these areas of good practice be promulgated throughout the Faculty. <i>(See 4.4.6)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Faculty has used a number of forums to communicate examples of good practice to colleagues. The College Showcase has had a number of presentations from members of the Faculty, as has the Science Faculty Education research Group (SciFER). A number of presentations from the Faculty at the 2005 HERDSA conference focussed on giving feedback. ▪ Projects on student use of feedback in the Faculty have been funded by SciFER in 2004 and 2005. Faculty members have published widely on feedback, in journals and conference proceedings, in the past few years.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Faculty TIF project on evaluations has analysed quantitative and qualitative data from previous years for both SCEQ and USE evaluations, and has identified feedback on assignments as a key priority for action during the next few years. ▪ Examples of good feedback procedures will be available on the Faculty Learning and Teaching webpage, currently under construction. ▪ Members of the faculty are presenting their feedback initiatives at the Best Practice Forum 2006
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student perceptions of feedback on their work have improved since 2003 both in USE and SCEQ evaluations. However the questions on feedback still show considerable spread in responses, with significant outliers in both the positive and negative areas, hence the focus in this area for 2006/7. ▪ A Faculty audit of resources for student writing and feedback, by the FOLT team, has identified a wide range of examples of best practice in giving feedback. ▪ Interviews and focus groups with students have established satisfaction with feedback processes but identified areas of miscommunication between markers and students, and lack of understanding of feedback as a learning tool.

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Recommendation 3	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty considers ways of ensuring the consistency of marking schemes across departments and schools. <i>(See 4.4.6)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Faculty has continued to encourage the use of explicit marking schemes for assignments, with a significant number of units providing detailed information on marking criteria prior to students submitting work.▪ Marking of assignments and exams is closely coordinated, particularly in the large first year units, to ensure consistency in marking where multiple markers are used. Quality checks are in place to analyse and report on difference between markers.▪ In a diverse faculty such as Science, it is inappropriate to try to devise common marking schemes across disciplines.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A Learning and Teaching Committee working party in 2006 is preparing guidelines on marking project work.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Quality checks continue to be in place for all large units of study, where the potential for most inconsistency occurs. Reports on these checks, and any action on outcomes, are presented to Heads of School or examiners meetings.▪ The Faculty stills need to focus on smaller units of study and areas where students conduct independent projects (see above).

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Recommendation 4	The Review Team noted the Faculty's involvement in the ITL research-led teaching project and recommends that it investigates ways of disseminating its success in this area across the University. (<i>See 4.5.4</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Science Faculty Education Research group (SciFER) has presented seminars on RLT initiatives. Presentations have also been made at College Showcases, and at national and international conferences. Members of the faculty have published journal papers in this area, many in conjunction with student cohorts.▪ The Faculty is creating a database of RLT examples (in conjunction with our activities on the ITL Strategic Working Group) to highlight such initiatives on the Faculty's webpage.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ RLT will be one of the themes for the 2006 Faculty of Science Showcase
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Collection of data on examples of good practice has heightened awareness of the significance of, and level of expertise in, this area of teaching in the Faculty. We still need to consolidate, and "sell", this area as one of our main strengths in Learning and Teaching.▪ Members of the Faculty have been invited to present their initiatives in RLT at a number of overseas universities.

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Recommendation 5	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty continue to monitor student concerns on tutor training and make arrangements for tutor training known to students. <i>(See 4.6.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Tutor and Demonstrator Training Program continues to be run each Semester, and all casual demonstrators and tutors are required to attend a workshop and participate in the online follow up program. ▪ An audit of discipline based training within the Schools is being continued in 2006, and results will be analysed to find any areas requiring further attention in the Faculty program. ▪ Schools are considering providing access to these reports to students via WebCT pages.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A review of the Tutor Training Program, now in its third year, is being carried out in 2006, and will involve interviews with alumni of the program, to determine their perceptions of the training and ways in which their teaching practice has evolved. Student from all disciplines in the Faculty will also be interviewed to determine their perceptions of tutors.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SCEQ responses to questions on good teaching have not changed significantly from 2001 to 2005. However, these questions do not specifically target the teaching by tutors and demonstrators. ▪ Internal evaluations of teaching, particularly for large units of study, indicate overall satisfaction with the tutors.

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Recommendation 6	The Review Team recommends that areas of good practice in relation to informing students on the outcomes of their feedback should be disseminated throughout the Faculty. <i>(See 4.7.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Faculty TIF project on Closing the Loop – feedback on student evaluations has conducted an audit of all processes of reporting and communicating with students about unit evaluations. We have developed a set of guidelines for the Faculty on a standardised process for reporting and communicating between students, Schools, the sub-committee on USE, and the Dean. ▪ A recommendation is also made that the faculty make use of a program, developed by members of the School of IT, which administers staff feedback responses to all USE evaluations within a School and provides an automated online coordinator-response to students in each unit. This response also forms part of the report to the Dean on evaluations.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project team will be visiting all Schools in the Faculty to discuss implementation of this process in 2006
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This communication with students is still be implemented, but areas in which it has been used in SIT, have indicated that it is well received. Evaluation of student perceptions of the feedback loop are being conducted in Semester 2 2006

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Recommendation 7	Whilst acknowledging that the management of double degrees is a University wide issue, and that steps have been taken to improve communication and advice to students undertaking combined degrees, the Review Team suggests that the Faculty ensure that students are provided with consistent guidance on the structure of each degree. <i>(See 4.11.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<p>Faculty of Science Associate Deans attend the enrolment sites of other faculties when invited during Main Round enrolment to give advice to students enrolled in combined courses or, in the case of the Faculty of Arts, jointly offered courses e.g. BLibStud, BAS.</p> <p>The 2007 Faculty of Science Handbook will contain stand alone resolutions for each of the combined degree courses (as supplied by the managing Faculty) thus ensuring that resolutions are consistent across Handbooks and websites.</p> <p>Associate Deans have responsibility for maintaining communication with the managing Faculties in the case of combined degrees and degrees offered under joint faculty resolutions. These Associate Deans also provide advice to administrative staff and students when clarification is sought.</p>
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Evaluation in progress

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Recommendation 8	The Review Team noted the current strategies and suggests that the Faculty puts further processes in place to manage the expansion in postgraduate coursework student numbers. <i>(See 4.12.1)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	Student numbers have stabilised. Program coordinators in the IT, Environmental Science, Coastal Management, Molecular Biotechnology and Coaching Psychology programs interview and advise all commencing students and are available for on-going consultation and advice. Space problems for IT students are being addressed as part of the new IT building (2010).
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Program coordinators are filling a very useful student liaison role and providing information and assistance when needed. Existing quotas on enrolments in MNutDiet and GradDipSc(Psych) are satisfactory.

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Recommendation 9	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty bring together some new timelines into a postgraduate review policy so that its quality assurance processes in this area are transparent. (<i>See 4.12.2</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	Professional accreditation is maintained for the IT degrees, the Nutrition & Dietetics degrees, and the Psychology degrees. This external accreditation process takes place at regular intervals and is used internally to review programs.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A review of the Applied Science programs is to be undertaken in 2006.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Professional accreditation processes require high standards for breadth and depth of professional knowledge, and with additional input from the Schools, ensure the quality and relevance of programs.

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Recommendation 10	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty improves awareness of the Academic Board policy <i>The use of parallel teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students in postgraduate courses</i> and ensure compliance with, and consistency in, its application in all departments and schools. (See 4.12.3)
Action taken by the Faculty	Units in which some parallel teaching has occurred were identified at meetings with Program Chairs and alternative delivery mechanisms introduced.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	One senior unit still has parallel teaching for lectures only, and this unit will be unavailable for postgraduates after 2006 (no possibility of having 'repeat' lectures or hiring another lecturer).
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	Units which involved parallel teaching that had not been specifically approved by the Academic Board will be phased out by 2007.

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Recommendation 11	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty be more proactive in seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for its courses and suggest using the Koori Centre and the School Outreach program for this purpose. It further recommends the establishment of a foundation program targeted to the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. <i>(See 5.5.1)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The Exec Director discusses enrolments with the Koori Centre during UAC deadline time. A number of students are admitted under special consideration and are provided with specialised mentoring.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	A meeting with the Koori Centre and current students is planned.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The introduction of the BST and a new introductory maths course may lead to more enrolments.

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Recommendation 12	The Review Team recommends that the Faculty further investigate opportunities for formal international and local benchmarking in this area in order to assist planning the next stage of the Faculty's growth. <i>(See 6.4)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	The Faculty instigated a Research Quality exercise with the University's DVC Research & Innovation and the Research Office.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	Individual schools are developing discipline-specific criteria for research performance.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	The results of this internal initiative have not been released yet; they are likely to be superseded by the Research Quality Framework that will be implemented by the Minister of Education, Science and Training.

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Recommendation 13	The Faculty is advised by the Review Team to improve communication to students and staff regarding the University Intellectual Property Rule. (<i>See 6.5</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	A compulsory question on IP was included in the 2004 Postgraduate Annual Progress Reports. We were not successful in our attempts to have this question included in the University-wide form in 2005. The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that these issues were covered in the Postgraduate Induction days. ENGG4061 Innovation/Technology Commercialisation is an available option in the Bachelor of Science and Technology course.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	The Faculty will include reference to the University Intellectual Property Rule in the 2007 Faculty Handbook and on the Faculty website.
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	.

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Recommendation 14	The Review Team suggests that the Faculty address issues relating to the entry standard and support for international students, especially in relation to ensuring that NESB students have the necessary language skills to do the courses. The Review Team further recommends that the Faculty investigate the provision of an induction program for all students arriving at non- standard times. <i>(See 7.2.3)</i>
Action taken by the Faculty	<p>IELTS levels have been raised in those programs requiring higher levels of verbal and written communication, namely the Nutritional degrees (MNutDiet, MNutSci, MAppSc(NutDiet) [from Jan 2006]; Doctor of Clinical Psychology/Doctor of Clinical Neuropsychology [from Jan 2006]; articulated MAppSc(PsychCoach) [from Jan 2005]; and Master of environmental Science & Law [from Jan 2006].</p> <p>All students are provided with advice by Program Coordinators at the commencement of their degree program and can consult with the Coordinators during semester.</p> <p>For research students – all have a University induction (organised by DOGS) and School inductions (not at Faculty level) at the beginning of each semester.</p> <p>Research NESB students especially are encouraged to attend relevant sessions held at the Learning Centre.</p>
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	It is too soon to assess whether the raised IELTS levels will allow students to perform at a higher level. Student support in the form of Program Coordinators is working well.

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Recommendation 15	The Review Team noted the concern of student about the clarity of the Faculty handbook, and suggests that more resources be invested in preparing a user friendly and understandable publication. (<i>See 9.5</i>)
Action taken by the Faculty	The Faculty is changing the 2007 handbook with a primary aim of making the publication more user-friendly for staff and students. In order to make the handbook easier to navigate, it has been restructured into targeted chapters which contain consolidated relevant information. This restructuring will also assist the increasing number of students who download strategic portions of the Handbook from the website, rather than purchasing the entire handbook, by minimising the quantity of text that will need to be downloaded.
Further action planned but not yet implemented (if appropriate)	
Faculty's evaluation of the success of action taken	We intend to evaluate the new format during 2007.